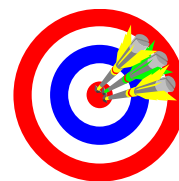


# To the Point

## Talking Points for Manufacturers



**EDUCATION AND WORKFORCE READINESS:** *American workers **are** the most productive workers in the world. They demonstrate daily the initiative, creativity and energy that have made American companies competitive and American manufacturing a model for the rest of the world. Unfortunately, as recent surveys show, many workers are doing so with inadequate support and eroding skills. To remain competitive in the global economy, America needs to do more -- both publicly and privately -- to educate and train the workforce of today and tomorrow.*

- **There is a growing skills gap. More than 80% of manufacturers say they are having trouble finding qualified employees. Sixty percent of manufacturers typically reject half of all applicants as unqualified because of the lack of basic skill. Moreover, entry-level skills in manufacturing have become more sophisticated, requiring more education and training to get to the first rung.**
- **But, there are solutions. They need to come from business, government -- and from American workers.**
- **The Congress has taken a good first step by consolidating the hodge-podge system of overlapping and ineffective government training programs into the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. WIA is now up for reauthorization and needs support.**
- **Education reform should focus on measuring and improving student performance in reading, mathematics, science, and technological literacy so that the skill levels of U.S. students are on par with their international counterparts. In addition, tax incentives should be enacted to support education and training investments.**
- **Business can and should do its part by working more closely with local schools, technical and community colleges and other post-secondary education providers to shape appropriate curriculum that prepares young people for the more technically-advanced jobs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.**
- **Businesses invest in plant and equipment. They also need to invest in their people. Companies in a position to do so, should invest at least 3 percent of payroll to educate and train employees.**
- **For their part, employees must take advantage of the education and training programs that are offered and invest some of their own time and resources to improve their skills.**

*These talking points are designed for communications with members of Congress and the media. Specific company examples will give these points greater emphasis. For more information on employee education and workforce readiness, visit our website at [www.nam.org](http://www.nam.org) or call or e-mail the NAM's Center for Workforce Success at (202)637-3011/[peisen@nam.org](mailto:peisen@nam.org).*

*The NAM – 16 million people who make things in America – encourages all of its 14,000 member companies (large and small) to join us in spreading the positive message about manufacturing's contributions to economic growth and the impact proposed legislation will have on our businesses and our employees.*

*The NAM advocates a pro-growth, pro-manufacturing agenda. We strongly believe it is also a pro-worker agenda.*